REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Entry of this amendment and reconsideration of all claims of record is respectfully requested. Claims 1-36 as originally and previously presented are currently pending in the application.

<u>Re the 35 U. S. C. § 112, 2nd , Rejection:</u>

Claims 4, 19 and 27 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for using the term "meet area". The Examiner alleges that it is unclear what the phrase "meet area" refers to within the claims. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Claim terms such as "random area" and "meet area" are clearly described in the specification at paragraphs [0035], [0036], [0069] and [0083] and, moreover, are used and illustrated in context, for example, in at least Figures 3A, 3B, 5C and 6.

<u>Re the 35 U. S. C. § 103(a) Rejection:</u>

The rejection of claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9-18, 20, 21, 24-26, 28-31 and 34 under 35 USC §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over US Patent 6,626,756 to Sugimoto in view of "Microsoft Golf 2001" (the "Steinberg" reference) is respectfully traversed.

Conventionally, in a video golf game, if a plurality of different types or modes of "shot" operations (i.e., golf ball hitting operations) are permitted to be selected within the game, the type/mode of operation to be performed is required to be specified prior to starting the game. Such being the case, the player is conventionally required to perform a specific input operation to select the particular desired shot operation mode/type before any game play action begins. Moreover, in order to change the particular type/mode of

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shot operation used during the course of playing the game (i.e., after gameplay has

begun), a further specific input operation is often also required. In contrast, applicants'

implementation, as set forth in the specification and claimed, allows a player to

dynamically select the particular type/mode of shot operation during the ongoing shot

operation process. Using applicants' claimed implementation, a game player is not

burdened with the necessity of performing extra operations for presetting and changing

the particular type/mode of shot operation – which allows for more convenient and

comfortable gameplay than experienced with the conventional prior art video golf games.

At least one patently distinct feature set forth in applicants' independent claims 1,

14, 15,16, 29 and 30, which not disclosed or suggested by any of the prior art currently of

record, relates to whether the game operator (a player) has elected to perform a two input

shot operation for implementing an auto mode type shot or elected to perform a three

input shot operation for implementing a manual mode type shot. More specifically, a

determination of the particular shot mode/type is based on whether the player performs a

"second input" using the claimed "first control switch" or performs the second input

using the claimed "second control switch." In other words, as set forth in these claims,

the second input provided by a player determines not only the shot power but also *the*

particular type/mode of shot operation (i.e., an *automatic* type shot operation based on

two inputs or a *manual* type shot operation based on three inputs).

Moreover, at least one further patently distinct feature not disclosed or suggested

by any of the prior art currently of record is set forth in applicants' independent claims 1,

14, 15,16, 29 and 30 wherein whenever a player elects to perform a shot operation based

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on two inputs (i.e., the auto mode type shot) by choosing to use the "second control switch" for the second input, the shot power is determined by the receiving of the second input performed by the player and only the hit location is *automatically* determined. Thus, in applicants' claimed implementation, the shot action/operation is actually not entirely performed in an automatic manner because the player's operational choice and skills affect at least the shot power. In other words, when the "second control switch" is used for the player's second input, the shot action is actually performed only semi-automatically because the hit location is set autonomously.

Performing a successful ball hitting action (i.e., shot operation) is one of the more crucial objectives in playing a video golfing game. Consequently, for most video golf game players, the ability to be able perform a golf shot operation easily and successfully and without frustrating additional input commands or controls becomes an important factor that contributes toward making the game fun and enjoyable to play. For example, if a golf shot action is entirely automated for the purpose of simplifying the shot operation, the fun and challenge of performing the golf shot action is taken away and this reduces the overall fun of playing the game. Consequently, although this further patentably distinct feature of applicants' claimed implementation provides an input operation that simplifies the golf shot action somewhat, electing to use that particular mode/type of shot operation does not remove all of the fun and challenge of the golf shot action because at least a portion of the operation still depends on a player's manual action. However, since applicants' particular claimed implementation of the golf shot operation can operate in this semi-automatic manner (i.e., the auto mode type shot

operation), even a beginning player or a player that is not very adept at performing a fully manual type shot operation based on three inputs may better enjoy playing the game.

In summary, applicants' respectfully contend that independent claims 1, 14, 15,16, 29 and 30 set forth at least the following two patentably distinct features which are neither disclosed nor suggested by any of the prior art references currently of record whether those references are considered either alone or together in combination:

(a) a particular type/mode of shot operation to be performed (e.g., a manual type shot operation or an auto shot type operation or some other type of shot operation mode) is determined by the second input performed by the player; and

(b) for the particular shot operation based on two inputs (auto shot mode), the shot power is determined in accordance with the player's second input but the hit location is determined autonomously.

Although Sugimoto discloses a golfing game which allows a player to perform a conventional shot operation based on three inputs, Sugimoto does not disclose features of performing a shot operation based on two inputs, determining the type of shot operation by the second input, and semi-automating the shot action by two inputs, as set forth in applicants' claims.

The Steinberg reference ("Microsoft Golf 2001") discloses a golfing game that has two different operational playing modes, i.e., an easy swing mode and an intermediate player mode. In particular, Steinberg describes that in the easy swing mode, a player performs a shot operation through a single click plus a mouse operation, whereas in an intermediate players mode, the player performs a shot operation through a double or

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triple click operation. However, Steinberg does not disclose any particular details of a shot operation based on a double or triple click that are even remotely similar to applicants' claimed implementation for shot operation in a golf game. Moreover, although the Steinberg reference discloses a golfing game that has two different operational playing modes, Steinberg does not teach or suggest an operation wherein when a shot operation is based on two inputs, the shot power is determined in accordance with the player's second input and the hit location is determined autonomously, as set forth in applicants' claims. For example, Steinberg does not disclose or suggest a manner of selecting a particular shot operation type based on the double click or the shot operation based on a triple click, or a manner of switching a shot operation between one based on a double click and one based on a triple click. In other words, Steinberg clearly does not teach or suggest applicants' claimed approach to determining the type of shot operation to be performed by the player wherein the type of shot operation is determined by the particular second input provided by the player.

In addition, Steinberg does not disclose or suggest how a cursor on a gauge is moved by a double (or triple) click, and how the shot power and hit location are determined based on a cursor position. In other words, Steinberg also clearly does not teach or suggest applicants' claimed feature for semi-automated shot operation wherein the shot power is determined in accordance with the player's second input but the hit location is determined autonomously.

Moreover, applicants contend that there is no objective teaching or disclosure anywhere in either the Sugimoto reference or the Steinberg reference (or in any of the cited and applied prior art of record) of modifying the Sugimoto game system or the Microsoft Golf 2001 game to provide a golf game machine as currently set forth by applicants' claims. Likewise, applicants' respectfully content that the Office Action fails to provide any reasonable objective basis that would have motivated one of skill in the art to modify the Sugimoto or Steinberg references to provide applicants' claimed implementation.

For at least the above reasons, applicants respectfully contend that at least applicants' independent claims 1, 14, 15,16, 29 and 30 are patentably distinct and not obvious over Sugimoto in view of the Steinberg reference.

In regard to the above rejection of applicants' independent claims 10 and 25, these claims set forth at least applicants' implemented feature wherein for a particular shot operation based on two inputs, the shot power is determined in accordance with the player's second input but the hit location is determined autonomously (i.e., a semi-automated type/mode of shot operation), which is neither taught nor suggested by either Sugimoto or Steinberg, consider alone or together.

The rejection of claims 7, 8, 22 and 23 under 35 USC §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Sugimoto in view of "Microsoft Golf 2001" (Steinberg) and further in view of the "Hot Shots Golf 2" game manual is also respectfully traversed.

Claims 7, 8, 22 and 23 are dependent on independent claims 1 and 16 and since neither Sugimoto nor Steinberg suggest the features or steps set forth in applicants' claims

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1 or 16 as discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that dependent claims 7, 8, 22 and

23 are patentable over at least the combined teachings of those references. Moreover, it

is submitted that claims 7, 8, 22 and 23, being dependent from claims 1 and 16, are

patentably distinct over the teachings of the "Hot Shots Golf 2" game manual for at least

the same reasons set forth above with respect to claims 1 and 16, as well as the further

distinction that unlike "Hot Shots Golf 2" applicants' claimed implementation for

selecting a spin direction of the ball does not require the use of at multiple input switches

on a directional pad.

The rejection of claims 32, 33, 35 and 36 under 35 USC §103(a) as allegedly

being unpatentable over Sugimoto in view of "Microsoft Golf 2001" (Steinberg) and in

view of the "Hot Shots Golf 2" game manual and in further view of "Hot Shots Golf 2

Screenshots" is respectfully traversed.

Claims 32, 33, 35 and 36 are dependent on independent claims 10 and 25 and

since neither Sugimoto nor Steinberg suggest the features or steps set forth in applicants'

claims 10 or 25 as discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that dependent claims 32,

33, 35 and 36 are patentable over at least the combined teachings of those references.

Moreover, it is submitted that claims 32, 33, 35 and 36, being dependent from claims 10

and 25, are patentably distinct over the further teachings of the "Hot Shots Golf 2" game

manual in view of "Hot Shots Golf 2 Screenshots" for at least the same reasons set forth

above with respect to independent claims 10 and 25.

In view of the Applicants' forgoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that

the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt

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allowance of this application are respectfully solicited. If any small matter remains

outstanding, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone Applicants' representatives at the

telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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